

New law statutorily establishes, within the Dept. of Education, the Governor's Program for Gifted Children which has been operating on the campus of McNeese State University in Lake Charles as an independent, residential summer program for certain elementary, middle, and high school students (in grades 6-10 and certain musically gifted students in grades 11 and 12) with the express purpose of providing a more challenging and enriching educational, artistic, and civic experience.

New law provides for the definition of terms as used in new law.

New law provides with respect to the appointment, term, powers, duties, and compensation of the program's director, including the following:

- (1) The present director shall continue to serve through August 30, 2004, absent his resignation, death, or removal by the governor for specified cause. All subsequent directors shall be appointed by the governor for four-year terms with Senate consent. Provides that the governor consider seriously recommendations for director from organizations providing program support and guidance.
- (2) The director shall exercise full executive, academic, administrative, functional, and fiscal control over all aspects of the program including decisions pertaining to admission of students, employment of faculty and staff, budget formulation and implementation, and financial affairs, curriculum formulation and implementation, setting academic standards, selecting course materials, and determining program session dates.
- (3) The director annually shall report to the governor and the state superintendent of education with respect to the program's budget and certain student information.
- (4) The director shall be compensated for his services in an amount to be determined annually as a part of the program's regular budget formulation procedure.

New law provides with respect to program funding as follows:

- (1) The legislature annually shall appropriate sufficient funds for the program's support, such appropriation to be made to the program.
- (2) The director may charge reasonable fees and tuition, which shall be paid in the manner as determined by the director.
- (3) The director, on behalf of the program, shall be authorized to apply for and receive grants, gifts, bequests, and other funds from any public and private sources not prohibited by law, including the federal government.
- (4) Prohibits funds received from other sources from supplanting legislative appropriations for the program.

New law provides for the location of the program at McNeese State University and further provides with respect to the duty of McNeese State University to make available certain facilities at certain rates. Provides that the director may designate another state college or university to house the program in accordance with certain specified procedures. Authorizes the director to purchase or construct facilities for program use and authorizes the program to

lease facilities from other entities.

New law provides with respect to registry of prospective students, including requiring the state Dept. of Education to assist the director in identifying candidates for admission to the program. Requires the director to notify the state superintendent of education of certain participant information and requires the superintendent, in return, to furnish certain information to the director regarding the identification of certain students in the program. Provides for confidentiality of such information and provides relative to the maintenance of such information by the state superintendent of education in a central registry of gifted students.

New law provides relative to other powers of the program including awarding of diplomas for program completion; conducting seminars and workshops for gifted children, parents, or teachers of the gifted; training teachers to teach gifted children; conducting research into methods and techniques for teaching gifted children; engaging in cooperative and joint ventures with other entities related to gifted education; identifying potential students for admission to the program; and establishing and operating programs for the musically gifted.

New law places the program within the Dept. of Education as provided in R.S. 36:801.1 (relative to entities transferred in the organization of the executive branch) making it independent of department control. Also specifies that the program shall be independent of control by the state superintendent and local and state education boards.

Effective upon signature of governor (June 30, 1999).

(Adds R.S. 17:1989.1-1989.8 and R.S. 36:651(Z))